

**§ 1262.103 Proceedings covered.**

(a) The Act applies to the following adversary adjudications conducted by the Agency:

(1) Adjudications under 5 U.S.C. 554 in which the position of NASA or any other agency of the United States, or any component of an agency, is presented by an attorney or other representative who enters an appearance and participates in the proceedings;

(2) Appeals of decisions made pursuant to section 6 of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 (41 U.S.C. 605) before the Board of Contract Appeals (BCA) as provided in Section 8 of that Act (41 U.S.C. 607);

(3) Any hearing conducted under Chapter 38 of Title 31 (31 U.S.C. 3801, et seq., as amended); and

(4) Adjudications under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 2000bb).

(b) The Act does not apply to:

(1) Any proceeding in which this Agency may prescribe a lawful present or future rate;

(2) Proceedings to grant or renew licenses (note, however, that proceedings to modify, suspend, or revoke licenses are covered if they are otherwise adversary adjudications); and

(3) Proceedings which are covered by a compromise or settlement agreement, unless specifically consented to in such agreement.

(c) NASA may also designate a proceeding as an adversary adjudication for purposes of the Act by so stating in an order initiating the proceeding or designating the matter for hearing. The Agency's failure to designate a proceeding as an adversary adjudication shall not preclude the filing of an application by a party who believes the proceeding is covered by the Act; whether the proceeding is covered will then be an issue for resolution in proceedings on the application.

(d) If a proceeding includes both matters covered by the Act and matters specifically excluded from coverage, any award made will include only fees and expenses related to covered issues.

[60 FR 12668, Mar. 8, 1995]

**§ 1262.104 Eligibility of applicants.**

(a) To be eligible for an award of attorney fees and other expenses, the applicant must be a "party" to the adversary adjudication for which an award is sought. The applicant must show that it meets all conditions of eligibility set out in this subpart and in subpart 1262.2.

(b) The types of eligible applicants are as follows:

(1) An individual with a net worth of not more than \$2 million;

(2) Any owner of an unincorporated business who has a net worth of not more than \$7 million, including both personal and business interests, and not more than 500 employees;

(3) A charitable or other tax-exempt organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) with not more than 500 employees;

(4) A cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)) with not more than 500 employees; and

(5) Any other partnership, corporation, association, unit of local government, or organization with a net worth of not more than \$7 million and not more than 500 employees.

(c) For the purpose of eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant shall be determined as of the date the proceeding was initiated.

(d) An applicant who owns an unincorporated business will be considered as an "individual" rather than as a "sole owner of an unincorporated business" if the issues on which the applicant prevails are related primarily to personal interests rather than to business interests.

(e) The employees of an applicant include all persons who regularly perform services for remuneration for the applicant, under the applicant's direction and control. Part-time employees shall be included on a proportional basis.

(f) The net worth and number of employees of the applicant and all of its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility. Any individual, corporation, or other entity that directly or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares or other interest of the applicant, or any corporation

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or other entity of which the applicant directly or indirectly owns or controls a majority of the voting shares or other interest, will be considered an affiliate for purposes of this part, unless the adjudicative officer determines that such treatment would be unjust and contrary to the purposes of the Act in light of the actual relationship between the affiliated entities. In addition, the adjudicative officer may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(g) An applicant that participates in a proceeding primarily on behalf of one or more other persons or entities that would be ineligible is not itself eligible for an award.

[51 FR 15311, Apr. 23, 1986, as amended at 60 FR 12668, Mar. 8, 1995]

**§ 1262.105 Standards for awards.**

(a) A prevailing applicant may receive an award subject to paragraph (b) of this section, for fees and expenses incurred in connection with a proceeding, or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, unless the position of the agency over which the applicant has prevailed was substantially justified. No presumption arises that the agency's position was not substantially justified simply because the agency did not prevail. The burden of proof that an award should not be made to an eligible prevailing applicant is on the agency.

(b) An award, for any portion of the adversary adjudication, will be denied if the applicant has unreasonably protracted the proceedings, or denied or reduced if special circumstances make the award sought unjust.

**§ 1262.106 Allowable fees and expenses.**

(a) Awards will be based on rates customarily charged by persons engaged in the business of acting as attorneys, agents, and expert witnesses, even if the services were made available without charge or at a reduced rate to the applicant.

(b) No award for the fee of an attorney or agent under these rules may exceed \$75 per hour. No award to com-

pensate an expert witness may exceed the highest rate at which this Agency pays expert witnesses, which is \$20 an hour (5 hours maximum) or maximum daily rate of \$100 (3 days maximum). However, an award may also include the reasonable expenses of the attorney, agent, or witness as a separate item, if the attorney, agent, or witness ordinarily charges clients separately for such expenses.

(c) In determining the reasonableness of the fee sought for an attorney, agent, or expert witness, the adjudicative officer shall consider the following:

(1) If the attorney, agent, or witness is in private practice, his or her customary fee for similar service, or, if an employee of the applicant, the fully allocated cost of the services;

(2) The prevailing rate for similar services in the community in which the attorney, agent, or witness ordinarily performs services;

(3) The time actually spent in the representation of the application;

(4) The time reasonably spent in light of the difficulty or complexity of the issues in the proceeding; and

(5) Such other factors as may bear on the value of the services provided.

(d) The reasonable cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, project, or similar matter prepared on behalf of a party may be awarded, to the extent that the charge for the service does not exceed the prevailing rate for similar services, and the study or other matter was necessary for preparation of the applicant's case.

**§ 1262.107 Rulemaking on maximum rates for attorney fees.**

(a) If warranted by an increase in the cost of living or by special circumstances (such as limited availability of attorneys qualified to handle certain types of proceedings), the Agency may adopt regulations providing that attorney fees may be awarded at a rate higher than \$75 per hour in some or all of the types of proceedings covered by this part. This Agency will conduct any rulemaking proceedings for this purpose under the informal rulemaking procedures of the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553).